JULIUS CÆSAR:
DID HE CROSS THE CHANNEL?

SCOTT SURTEES.

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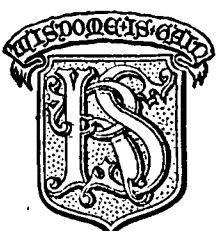
BY THE REV. SCOTT F. SURTEES,

RECTOR OF SPROTBURGH, YORKSHIRE.



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JULIUS CÆSAR:

DID HE CROSS THE CHANNEL?

Chapter I.

DID Julius Cæsar cross the Channel? In giving an answer in the negative to the above question we ask for a fair and dispassionate hearing; and, in order to avoid circumlocution, pass at once our Rubicon, and propound, as capable of all proof, the following historical heresy, viz.: that Cæsar never set foot at Boulogne or Calais, never crossed the Channel, or set eyes on Deal or Dover, but that he sailed from some place in front of the mouths of the Rhine or Scheldt, most probably from a peninsula formerly the fore-shore of Walcheren, that he made the coast of Britain in his first expedition, off Cromer; that in his

second he purposed to make the land at or near Wells, and being carried a little beyond the point, found himself off Hunstanton and, pulling in to the shore at *Brancaster Bay*, fixed there his camp.

We have long held the conviction that thus it must be, and waited for the publication of the Emperor's "Life of Cæsar," in order to find out what would be said on the popular side of the question. Evidently, with all the care and minute research Louis Napoleon has employed upon the investigation of the subject, he is driven to great straits to make even a colourable case, and difficulties meet him at every turn..

First he is obliged to bring the Morini from the Scheldt and the mouths of the Rhine, where they were certainly situate, to occupy the whole length of the coast of Belgium, and the north-eastern coastline of France as far as Boulogne; yet we know from Cæsar (B. II. 4), that they were far from being the most populous of the Belgic tribes. Then the Veneti, who obviously occupied a position on that coast, are moved yet further down. Next he is obliged to fling over Cæsar's statement, viz., that he crossed at the shortest passage between the Continent and

Britain (*brevissimum*), and to take him to Boulogne, to find a harbour that would in any way answer the description, or from whence Cæsar could sail with a south-west wind. He makes him take ten hours for a run of thirty miles with a fair wind; he is obliged to picture a landing on a coast which is not situate in a corn-producing country, and where he could not send out, as he did, his legions to forage; he can find no shallows or flat ground covered with the tide, over which his ships could row round to the flank of the enemy; and when he returns he comes back to a district where there are no marshes in which the Morini could be sheltered.

In his second expedition he is necessitated to make Cæsar march, whilst he is waiting for his ships to rendezvous, from Boulogne to the Rhine and back, to campaign in the country of the Treveri, in an incredible short space of time; a march more suited to the means of locomotion in our day than to the slow tread of Cæsar's legions.

The Meldæ he must place, although he does it with reluctance, far from their "habitat" near the Scheldt. He can make nothing out of Cæsar "leaving Britain behind him" as he voyaged.

The little brook "Stour," which our school-boys would despise as a leap, is advanced to the dignity of a river. Deal, which he has selected as the point of disembarkation, he has forgotten must be the place of re-embarkation, and if it was indispensable, "in order to embark an army on board 800 ships, it should be at a point where there is sufficient space to allow ships to approach the banks so that all may be embarked at one tide," Deal will not fulfil these conditions, as Cæsar did re-imbark all his troops and sail at one tide. Last, but not least, the Emperor fails in his nautical calculations, and is then himself altogether at sea!

Now Cæsar in his first expedition does not mention by name what port he sailed from, "he repaired to the country of the Morini, whence the passage from Gaul to Britain is the shortest." We feel almost ashamed of calling the attention of the student of history to the fact that the Morini and Menapii dwelt at or near the *mouths of the Rhine or Scheldt.*

Strabo tells us that Britain and the mouths of the Rhine were near enough to be in sight. He also informs us (Lib. IV.) that "those who sail

from *the mouths of the Rhine* sail from Ition, a port of the Morini,* which the divine Cæsar used as a naval station when he crossed into Britain." Ptolemy and Pliny tell us that the port of the Morini was called Gessoriacum, or Gæsoriacum. Pomponius Mela says, "it was the best known port of the Morini." Pliny again (Lib. IV.) speaking of *the mouths of the Rhine*, says, "over against this tract lieth Britain." When next we hear of Britain after Cæsar's time (Dion Cassius, LX.), we find the soldiers under Plautius encouraged "by a meteor which, springing from the east, darted across to the west, whither they were navigating." Procopius, speaking of Brittia (he evidently means Brittania), says, "in the Northern Ocean lies the island Brittia, not far from the continent, right opposite the outlets of the Rhine." Dionysius Periegeta places the British Islands "αντια Ρηνου." Æthicus Ister also states "that the *nearest* shore of Britain is over against the country of the Morini and Menapii

* "Morini," from "Mōre," "flat ground near the sea." It was from More in Norway that Rolf Ganger sailed to conquer Normandy.

and Batavi,"* thus bearing out "Cluver," who has as follows: "Scalde enim Morinos, ut antè ostensum, a Germanis Cisrhenanis, quorum extremi Toxandri, distinxit; Cæsar autem omneis istos insulanos a Morinorum nomine segregat." (Lib. II. c. 29.)

Well, next we join issue with the Emperor on these several points: "It was at Boulogne that Caligula caused a Pharos to be erected, and that Claudius embarked for Britain. It was thence that Lupicinus under the Emperor Julian, and Theodocius under the Emperor Valentian and Constantius Chlorus, and lastly, in A. D. 893, the Danes set sail." As to the Pharos built by Caligula, Camden tells us, "it was erected on the coast of Holland, and that the foundations were still visible at low water, and that the people of the country called it 'Britenhuis.'" Now we learn from Suetonius that it was for "Germany" he started on this expedition, and one of his objects was to recruit his cohort of *Batavians* who

* See Cæsar (Bell. Gall. Lib. IV.), whence it is plain that the confluence of the Rhine and Meuse took place in the country of the Menapii.

lived at the mouths of the Rhine. It was there that bad fool ordered some of these Germans, soldiers of his, to be carried over the Rhine, and then, playing at making them prisoners, pretended he had captured them. It was here, on the shores of "the Ocean," that he gathered up the shells as spoils of Britain.* Then Claudius, no doubt, follows the same course, and sails from the same port as Plautius his pioneer, and he, we have already noted, sailed *from east to west.* His short campaign was against the Brigantes (see Juvenal, Seneca, &c.), and Boulogne would have been far away out of his track. Julian again has frequent intercourse with Britain, employs a fleet of corn ships to go to and fro; these come and go from the mouths of the Rhine, where he establishes his depôts (see Libanius, Zosimus, Amm. Marcellinus, Eunapius).

Then Constantius besieges Carusius (a Menapian, remember,) at Gesoriacum, blocks up the

* "Caligula advanced towards the ocean, as if he designed to carry the war into Britain, put his army in order of battle on the shore, embarked, and after he had gone a little way out to sea, returned."

DION CASS. *abridged by Xiphilin*

harbour, " where the sea, by the alternating tides, is brought up to their very gates," he makes it inaccessible to their ships by piles and stones; and yet Carusius is able, by another exit, to carry off his fleet into Britain. Constantius's fleet " was then ready to launch into the ocean from every river's mouth." How in any way does, or ever could Boulogne answer to these descriptions? (see Eumenius and Mammertinus.)*

Lastly, as to the Danes (A.D. 893). What is really stated in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle is: " In this year the great army, about which we formerly spoke, came again from the East kingdom, west to ' Bunnan,' and there was shipped; so that they came over in one passage, horses and all, and they came to land at Limenan muth (Gaimar, Limne) with two hundred and fifty ships. This port is in the eastern part of Kent, at the east end of the great wood which we call Andred." Now the army to which reference is made, we find, by referring back to the Saxon Chronicle (A.D. 891), was an army which had gone away

* Giraldus Cambrensis, speaking of the arrival of the Oastmen, says,—" They are called ' Ostmen' from a word corrupted from Saxon, Eastern-men."

east, and had been defeated by "Arnulf." Now we learn from the Chronicle (A. D. 877) that Arnulf dwelt on "thœm londe be eastan kin," and they are said to come again from the east kingdom west to Bunnan, and it is mentioned as an extraordinary fact that in one passage they came to Limenan muth, horses and all. How could they have made more than one passage from Boulogne, and what would there be extraordinary in that short run? or what is there in Bunnan to identify it with Boulogne, save that the word begins with a big "B," and has an "n" and "u" in it?

Having reviewed the Emperor's statement, let us now strengthen our position by a few "broadcast" observations of our own. We have it stated in the ancient records of *British* history that it was from *Flanders* that Cæsar sailed, and thither he returned (see "The Brut," edited by Sir F. Madden, p. 309).

"Into Flandres he ferde and makede his schip fœrde. It was on a time, that the day was well bright, and the sun was most bright, and Cæsar wende in Flandres lond wandrenge bi sœ strond, and he this lond a-kende. 'Wat his that ilke lond feor over sœ stram?'" he asks. Cæsar invades Britain,

is worsted in battle, "went forth-right to ship, all bi night, he had weather most fair and wenden into Flandre."*

Let us next note how our part of the coast fits in with the account of Cæsar's expeditions. He sails, we suppose, from a peninsula, at low water accessible, at high water an island, for we are told by Florus (Lib. IV.) that Drusus "Bonnam et Gesoriacum pontibus junxit." This, we conjecture, might be in front of Walcheren or Leyden. The port has another name, Ictium, Iccium, ιτιον, ικιον; is not this the port of the Ictii? Ictis was clearly situate in the German Ocean, one of the ικτεριδες, or Glessariæ, "where amber is engendered," over against Britain. Now turn to our dictionaries. Latin, glessum or glœsum, amber; French, ictère, jaundice; Greek, ικτεριας, yellow. Pliny adds that Britain was only between fifty and sixty miles from Gesoriacum (see also Dion, Bede, and Richard of Cirencester).

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* Cæsar doulent et courrouciez rentra en ses nefz avec ce quil lui estoit demoure de gens sy ala tant nagant parmy la mer quil arriva en Flandres."—*Croniques de la Grant Bretaign, par Jehan de Waurin*, lib. II. c. 34.

The headlands on this east coast have been disappearing year by year. Take up a Norfolk Directory, or an East Riding local history, you will find this village has been carried off by the encroachments of the sea, and that place has a church that has been washed away, and this is especially the case round Cromer and its adjacent villages. Now if this has been going on for near 2000 years, it is clear that the distance from shore to shore (now not more than eighty or ninety miles) may have been then much less, and that Pliny's guess of between fifty and sixty miles was not so far from wrong; and in that change of coast "Ictis" may have shared the same fate as we know other places * have met with. Heylin states "that in the time of King Henry II. Flanders was so overflown that many thousands of people, whose dwellings the sea had devoured, came into

* "Sir H. Spelman was informed that by report there had been fifty churches in Dunwich and that the foundations and church-yards of St. Michaels, St. Mary's, St. Martin, and St. John's, were then to be seen .... The sea hath gained so much hereabouts, that all the churches are now swallowed up except All Saints'; one particularly having fallen into the sea within these few years."

CAMDEN.

England to beg new seats, and were by that king first placed in Yorkshire, and then removed to Pembrokeshire. Since that it hath in Zeland swallowed eight of the islands, and in them 300 towns and villages; many of whose churches and strong buildings are at a dead low water to be seen." Singular also, much amber is found on that coast. We ourselves, when young, have searched for and sometimes found amber on the beach at Cromer. But Ictium was also called Gesoriacum; this, no doubt, was the name given it by the northern traders,—"Gae," to go, "Soreise," a sea voyage (see Dictionary), Gāesoreise. Our ports also suit exactly Cæsar's narrative. He starts at night, and arrives at 10 a. m. with a favourable wind, (we know from Cæsar's second expedition, that this was south-west,) supposing it to be from Walcheren to Cromer or Wells or Hunstanton, (a nice little night's run, as was observed to me by a captain of a vessel who knew well that coast,) it would easily be done, even if present distances are allowed. Then the steep cliffs at these places would exactly answer to the account Cæsar gives, "that they could throw down darts upon them." Then Cæsar waits until 3 o'clock for the tide to

ebb, and, taking advantage of it, runs on to Weybourne to the shingle beach where the cliff ends. It is high tide, mark! at 3 o'clock on the 24th of August; six days after, (August 30th,) it is full moon. Take your tidal tables and calculate back six days from the full moon, and you will find, not only that this must fix Cromer as the spot where Cæsar made the land, but that it could be no other place, supposing our data correct, owing to the influence of the tidal wave, within 360 miles. Then the high tide, at full moon, rises on this coast full eighteen or twenty feet, which will account for "his ships being disabled by the rising of the tide." They land upon a coast in a corn-growing country, they go out to forage, as they had provided no corn; one day, as they are reaping, they fall into an ambuscade and meet with grievous loss, and it ends in Cæsar's leaving Britain. Now here we find a Roman camp* still in existence,

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* "Here (Brancaster) we see the plain remains of the said Roman camp, answering the figure of that which is described by Cæsar, twelve foot high, with a rampire and ditch eighteen foot deep."—CAMDEN.

and the name "Branc castra," surviving the lapse of ages, the very name given to it by the Britons, in memory of their success over their enemies, whilst reaping their "Brance;" for we find (in Camden, p. xxvi.): "Gaul, saith Pliny, yieldeth a peculiar sort of corn, which the natives call 'Brance,' we 'Sandalum,' a very fine sort of grain. Among the Britains a sort of grain, which yields a pure white flower, is called 'Guineth Vrank,' and with us in Norfolk 'Brank.'"*

Cæsar's second expedition starts, it appears, although we do not know for certain, from the same place as that of the previous year. He is, recollect, at the Rhine, amongst the Treveri, just before he sails; his fleet and legions assemble at the port of the Morini, "Gesoriacum," ("Ictium"); he sets sail, at sunset, with a south-west wind; it takes him longer to make the passage, as the wind drops during the night, and Cæsar finds that he has "left Britain *behind* him to the left." Where, in the Channel, could this happen? but on our

* May not "Ritubi" be a compound of the Northern "Rit," corn or grain? We learn from Giraldus that these northern traders established themselves as merchant adventurers at the principal sea-ports of our coasts.

supposition that he purposed to make *Wells*, and is carried past *Hunstanton*, this would exactly be the case, and, taking to his oars, and coming back with the flood tide, he would pull in to land at *Brancaster Bay;* he lands at noon, thus taking from sixteen to eighteen hours to make the passage. It appears, we think, that it was not on the same beach as that of the year before he disembarked, as that was "*plano* et aperto littore," this "*molli* et aperto:" "plano," the shingle bed beyond Weybourne, "molli," the softer or muddier shore further on. He makes a night march of twelve miles to Hanworth, "a place singularly strong by nature and by art;" the enemy "come down" to meet him at the river Glanvron; and the mound, the key of the position, yet exists.

There is another undesigned coincidence we may mention, in addition to the amber which the Romans got from the port they frequented in Britain, and the corn or "brank" which yet may be seen growing in the fields in Norfolk, called now by the same name as then. From the part of Britain frequented by the Romans came to Rome the oysters so dear to the Roman "gourmands;" all speak of the oyster fisheries in Britain;

and here even yet, off the coast near Wells, remain in use famous oyster beds, the oysters of which, larger and finer than others, are called by the name of "Burnham Flats." Again, the inhabitants of the part of Britain frequented by the Romans in these earlier days, used "marle" for the purposes of agriculture (Pliny, B. XVII, C. 8), and it is here that Mr. Coke, of Norfolk, turned a barren wilderness into a fruitful field, by returning to the practice of the earlier Britons, and marling his broad acres in these parts. Here then we have a coast where amber, corn, marle, and oysters are found. We may also note that barrows, intrenchments, and earthworks abound in every village far and near upon that coast, and will well repay archæological research.

We have done, not for want of matter, for our note-book is yet full of unexhausted notices from other writers, which tell in favour of the opinions we have put forward. Every author who mentions Britain touches upon no point in opposition to our view which is incapable of explanation;* the majority, either directly or indirectly, say

* See Appendix.

something to support it. We have found, we believe, the key to open up the mystery which has hitherto, through ages, enveloped the subject. We leave to others the pleasing task of further discoveries, fully confident of this one thing, that if ever there was an historical fact out of joint and out of place, it is the fabled crossing of the Channel by Julius Cæsar: and that there are few points of history more self-evident and precise than that Cæsar sailed from at or near the mouths of the Rhine, and landed upon the coasts of Norfolk.

CHAPTER II.

WE had written thus far, and the above sheets were in the press, when it occurred to us that if we were right in our theory it was possible some relics might yet be in existence which would support our views, and so we started to visit the different places on the coast where previously we had conjectured Cæsar would land. We have found our views stand the test of the strictest local criticism and evidence upon evidence, fact upon fact, accumulate upon us at every turn and point. In the minutest details, land and sea, hill and coast, marsh and river, Roman camps and Celtic habitations, British scoria, and Roman pottery, traditions of living people and barrows of past ages, all bring to bear a mass of corroborative testimony that is almost overwhelming in its minutiæ and

exactness. We will try and condense it as much as we are able.

We had fixed upon Cromer as the point where Cæsar made the land, Sheringham the promontory which Dio Cassius says that he rounded; Weybourne as the shingle beach, seven or eight miles distant, where the cliff ended and Cæsar disembarked. Now the cliffs, up to the very edge, are smooth and level ground, and there would be no difficulty in the British chariots and horsemen keeping up with the ships as they dropped down with the ebb-tide. Then the nature of the shore is such that their chariots could easily manœuvre even down to the very water's edge. The water is so deep at high tide and the shingle beach here so abrupt and shelving, that Cæsar's larger ships could come close in shore, and it is literally true to the letter that his soldiers would have to jump into deep water, whilst the smaller galleys could row up to the very bank, and come to blows hand to hand with the enemy. The spring tide at full moon rises from eighteen to twenty feet, which would dash together and cripple his ships; here in the marsh, at the very border of the sea, rises a fit place for his camp, a

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mound of large extent elevated above the marshes, and affording under its shelter an anchorage for his fleet. This mound, "Green Barrow Hill" or "Grenaburh," lies between Weybourne and Salthouse; opposite is an old Roman causeway running down to it from Kelling, with a track direct through the marshes to the hill, and with a streamlet of clear fresh water alongside. Here are found in great abundance, as we shall presently relate, Roman culinary and drinking articles, and heaps of bones and other things, which plainly indicate a Roman camp. We ourselves in our short walk were told that if we kept our eyes open we could pick up Roman pottery, &c. and came back with our pockets full; we doubt if this would be the case on the highways and byeways in any other part of England. On the hills facing this mound, at Salthouse Heath, we find barrow after barrow; at Weybourne itself, another Roman camp on a smaller scale may be traced; at Weybourne, again, the telegraph wires enter "the ocean" to take the shortest (brevissimum) route to the opposite shore. In this district there is an old saying familiar in every one's mouth as a household word—

"He that England's crown would win,
Must at Weybourne Hope begin."

"Weybourne Hope" is still the promontory the sailors make for as their last land-mark as they sail along this coast.

The following articles of Roman workmanship have been found, and are in the possession of Mr. Bolding, at or near Weybourne, mostly on Greenbarrow Hill, and near the road immediately opposite on the land side of the marsh:* Roman pottery in great quantities, chiefly for culinary use, mortars, amphoræ to hold drinking-water, and drinking-cups (many of these mortars are studded with scoria), a perforated cullender, Dunrobrivæ ware, small quantity of Samian ware, flange tiles, scored tiles, pieces of iron, large-headed nails, coin, glass, remains of glass vessels, turned ivory knife-handle,

* We are indebted to Mr. Bolding, a gentleman resident at Weybourne, whose archæological attainments of the highest order are united with that sound common-sense which in archæologists in general is so apt to be wanting,—for this valuable information as regards Weybourne and its vicinity. It was his research found out these Celtic pits and the Hanworth embankment, and it was he who collected and has preserved in his studio these many treasures indicative of Roman occupation.

bones in heaps—in quantities sufficient to encourage an enterprising bone-man to collect them and sell them for manure!—they were bones of different animals and teeth, principally horses and hogs, horns and teeth of oxen. Then there are signs of an after location in this same district nearer Weybourne, viz. large quantities of broken vessels and pottery untouched by the lathe, supposed to be, from their make, not Roman but Saxon; Roman pottery has also been found in Mr. Bolding's fold-yard at Weybourne.

Next, as to Cæsar's second expedition, he landed "at different points" along the coast (Dio Cassius, xl. 1). There is a camp at Brancaster with the fosse clearly marked; we calculated that this enclosed about eight acres. There is another, we were told, further on, at Holme, almost surrounded by the sea; then there is at Holkham one of the most perfect Roman camps existing, we estimated it inclosed about twelve acres in its area, the different gates are yet to be traced on the ramparts; there is a raised causeway, both towards land through the marshes, and seaward through the "sand dunes" or hills which would afford a protection for his fleet; so also is there running

in from the sea, and forming a harbour a creek at Brancaster Staithes,—a channel from whence at high water Cæsar could embark all his army at a single tide; we doubt if there is any other spot on the coast of Britain so convenient for such a difficult operation (600 or 800 ships and 25,000 men).

Then also it was natural to suppose that if there was a large army on the cliffs prepared to receive Cæsar, the British population must also have had their habitations here. We are confident there are no such numerous Celtic pits in other parts of Britain as these at this very spot on the cliffs at Cromer. There is a large British or Celtic dwelling-place, or town (if so you choose to call it,) consisting of *several thousand* Celtic habitations. It begins at Felbrigg and runs up to Beeston. It is divided across the middle by a bank, the base of which is from twelve to twenty feet in width, as if two tribes had been encamped together. At each end of this encampment are two large Celtic burial-grounds, and here is also found, in considerable quantities, Celtic pottery. At the extremity of the cliff, on the high sand hills above Weybourne, is another vast Celtic habitation; not so numerous, however, by one-

tenth as the larger settlement above Cromer, yet here Mr. Bolding has counted near upon 1000 pits. Singular, close to this settlement is a heap of scoria. It is in appearance like bronze, and evidently has much copper in its composition. We have sent it to be analyzed, and hope that we may be enabled by the help of science to find out what that metal was, for which Britain was then so famous, and which was one of the temptations, let alone the honour and glory, which led Cæsar on to this invasion.*

There is another place we have to fix the situation of. Taking Holkham as Cæsar's advanced camp, more strongly fortified, as being nearer the enemy,—at the distance of twelve miles in the rear of these Celtic towns we find the stronghold of the British. Here, at Hanworth, is indeed a position "strong by nature and by art." It is an enclosure on two sides of a triangle shut in by the river Glanvron; on the third, in the direction of Holt, defended by a strong embankment, the direction of which, notwithstanding the lands being

* Suetonius speaks of the enormous debt in which Cæsar was involved.

under plough, may be distinctly traced. It encloses an area of from two to three hundred acres. It takes in wooded knolls and strong positions, and at the extreme apex of the triangle, near the Rectory, where the river comes to a narrow point, is a lofty hill fort, the mound or earthwork, we have little doubt, that Cæsar's soldiers carried by "forming the testudo," and behind are "the hills and woods" to which they drove the Britons.

We have a shrewd idea that we could point out Cassivelaunus' stronghold, and the place where Cæsar camped over against it, and the ford over which he sent his cavalry to turn their flank, but we wish not to overlay our subject with what may be partly conjecture and not capable of proof. Whatever evidence the most sceptical can ask for, we believe, as far as we have gone, we can produce it, and hold our own against all comers. We feel confident that few of the many points we have advanced will need, even in detail, modification or change. If "seeing is believing," no one, we think, with Cæsar's Commentaries in his hand, or the salient features of his expedition to Britain in his head, could follow the coast-line as we have done, from Cromer to Gore point, without being

convinced with a conviction that leaves no shade or shadow of a doubt behind, that these are Cæsar's very landing-places and camps, that we stand on ground where Cæsar himself may have set foot; that here he camped, and there he fought, that from those hills above us the Britons watched his movements, followed him along the cliffs, closed with his legions on their landing; on that shingle beach drove down their chariots amongst his soldiers as they struggled on shore, and finally, after a short sharp campaign, forced him back to his ships and from Britain, without that booty in either slaves or minerals (vide Cicero,) which he and his had hoped to gain. His second expedition also we can map out and explain; we can take up our position within the ramparts of the camp at Holkham, the same almost in its leading features now as Cæsar planned and left it then, and from thence we can trace the course of his night march to the British stronghold at Hanworth, the exact locality of which he was well acquainted with from its situation in reference to his first campaign; we can point out the very place where he drew up his ships for safety, and whence, with that large army, he could re-embark at a single tide,

on that night when he left for ever that Britain he dared to win, but from whose shores he retreated foiled and baffled by the energy and skill and valour which were more than a match for his discipline and legions,—for recollect, it is Cæsar himself who tells the story of his campaign, and makes the best of his failures and practical defeat.

Strange it is, that in this busy bustling England of the nineteenth century, with its teeming population and its craving after land, that alike in the marshes on the shore, and the sand hills on the heights, Roman camp and British dwelling should both be left untouched by plough or spade! May they not read us a lesson, in this sceptical age, when history, sacred and profane, is so recklessly and roughly handled, that after all that which we cannot make fit or understand, may be not the fault or error of the historian, but our own wilful, crass, stupid blindness, which, as in this case, has hid from us the meaning of that which, when we look at it aright, is clear and plain as the sun at noonday, and may convince us not only that we may "live and learn," but also may teach us to hold fast to that precious heirloom which belongs to people of every age and clime, viz.: that

in the long-run, although it may be after the lapse of centuries, " magna est veritas et prævalebit,"—truth will come uppermost and error disappear.

APPENDIX.

(*Page* 18.)

THE Commentaries mention the distance as being thirty miles. This we know to be wrong, as thirty miles is not the shortest (*brevissimum*) passage across the Channel. Every student of history well knows how names and numbers are altered both in history sacred and secular, as the transcriber's will or fancy leads him. Cæsar, no doubt, wrote LXXX, but when the Channel theory was broached the transcribers, knowing that could not be, struck out the L and left the XXX. The Emperor mentions an instance of this kind (p. 94, Vol. II.) as regards "the Doubs," at Besançon, where he says "the copyists must have omitted an M. before DC."

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WAIFS AND STRAYS OF NORTH-HUMBER HISTORY.

Opinions of the Press.

"Taking local nomenclature and local tradition as a basis for his enquiry, he enters into a consideration of the circumstances under which Hengist and his brother Horsa came to Britain; and, taking Doncaster, and the names of places in its immediate vicinity, chiefly those to the west and south, it is astonishing to how great an extent he is able to confirm, in their leading features, the narratives of our ancient chroniclers. Nennius, Bede, the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, Layamon, in his version of the 'Brut,' Hollingshed, Geoffrey of Monmouth, Hector Boece, and, lastly, the 'Buik of the Chroniclis of Scotland,' are all collated and found to point to the district already indicated as 'the location of Hengist.' In the same way—that is, with the aid of local nomenclature and frequent reference to the chroniclers—our author is able to fix still more unerringly the site of 'the last battle of Hengist, and his burial-place.'"—*The Reader.*

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"Mr. Surtees seems warranted in coming to the conclusion 'that there was at Coningsburgh an early settlement of Saxons, in immediate connection with some mighty Saxon chieftain.' If we admit that Hengest lived at Coningsburgh, there is some *primâ facie* probability that the scene of his last battle would be in the neighbourhood. We have accounts of this engagement, in which the Saxon is said to have been defeated, from (amongst others) Gildas, Geoffrey of Monmouth, and Layamon, in his translation of the "Brut." The last-mentioned author expressly says that it was fought near Coningsburgh Castle, and Mr. Surtees certainly shows that local tradition and local nomenclature tend strongly to show that a great battle did at some time or other take place here. Without committing ourselves to an unqualified acceptance of Mr. Surtees's speculations, we must say that he

appears to us to make out a very fair case. It is certainly extremely likely that this part of Yorkshire should have been the scene of one of the most severely contested struggles between the Britons and the Saxons, because we know that the district was an early and a favourite settlement of the latter. At all events, the arguments and statements of the author are well worth consideration."—*London Review.*

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"True, he has not dug up the figure of a four-winged Dragon, or a flying bull, but he has, to our thinking, clearly made out the resting-place of Hengest the Saxon, and has adduced arguments which go a long way towards solving an interesting historical problem—the whereabouts of the seat of the almost forgotten Lindisse Bishopric, and he clearly proves by quotation from the old 'Chroniclis,' that the location of Hengest was in this district, and that 'Hengest's Castell,' where the hero resided, is the veritable Conisborough Castle. The next chapter is devoted to a consideration of the last battle of Hengest and his burial place, the former of which Mr. S. proves to have taken place near Cadeby, on which occasion Hengest fell, being buried in a field still retaining the name of King's-grave-field. Here the importance of local nomenclature is strikingly seen, and we think the author satisfactorily proves his points."—*Doncaster Chronicle.*

"'Those whom it may concern,' that is, the students of antiquity, this little book will commend itself. It is evidently written with great care, and is at the same time remarkably free from the prejudices which so frequently mark productions of the kind limited to a certain locality. It will prove a valuable addition to the library of the student of our local nomenclature and early history."—*Northern Express.*

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